

# **Report on the Technical Assistance Visit to Oakland Unified School District Intern Program**

**April 2010**

## **Overview of this Report**

A summary of the Technical Assistance visit to the Oakland Unified School District is provided.

## **Staff Recommendation**

This is an information item.

## **Background**

New institutions, upon approval of their initial educator preparation programs, are assigned to one of the seven accreditation cohorts. In order to provide feedback to the new sponsors on their program implementation to date, and to report to the COA on the progress of the programs, Technical Assistance visits are provided two years prior to the scheduled accreditation site visit. Technical Assistance visits that have/will be conducted for 2009-10 include the following institutions: Santa Barbara County Education Office, Oakland Unified Intern Program, REACH, Standards Aligned Instructional Leadership (SAIL), and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). This item reports on the technical assistance visit to the Oakland Unified Intern Program.

In 2008, the Commission granted Oakland Unified School District initial institutional approval and the Committee on Accreditation approved the district's Mild/Moderate Education Specialist credential program. Although the district employs hundreds of interns who are enrolled in various educator preparation programs throughout the Bay Area, the district intern program was established specifically to help address the chronic shortage of qualified individuals in special education in the district. The district had already begun operating a program, the Oakland Teaching Fellows, to recruit individuals to high need teaching fields (math, science, special education, and physical education) in the district. The district intern program in Mild/Moderate is offered via a district intern delivery model. The program began with 27 program participants. In the current year, the program has expanded its partnerships to include local charter schools, neighboring school districts, and Teach for America, and is currently preparing 60 Mild/Moderate Education Specialist credential candidates.

The technical assistance visit took place on February 22-23, 2010. The program personnel were well prepared for the visit. The CTC staff and two members of the BIR followed many of the procedures that are used in a traditional accreditation site visit. The major difference was that no standard findings were decided by the team and no accreditation recommendation was considered. Rather, the team provided formative feedback to the institution about the adequacy of evidence provided to demonstrate that all standards were being addressed by the program.

The first day of the visit consisted of an orientation to the program by the program's management team followed by back to back interviews with stakeholders. The reviewers and consultant interviewed the program leadership, leadership at the district office, seminar

instructors, key partners such as representatives from Teach for America and the New Teacher Project, field supervisors, candidates, completers, the credential analyst, and employers. The review team met over dinner and into the evening to discuss the various aspects of the program and their alignment with the standards. The second day consisted of an early morning meeting with the program director to clarify reviewers' understanding of the program operations and to ask further questions about some of the issues raised in the stakeholder interviews. A written report was provided to and discussed with program personnel at an exit meeting.

Although at the time of the technical assistance visit Oakland Unified School District offered only a single program, by the time of the full site visit in two years the district's BTSA induction program will have transitioned into the Commission's accreditation system. In addition, the district has submitted documents for approval of a Moderate/Severe program. If approved and implemented by then, this program along with the BTSA induction program will be reviewed at the formal accreditation site visit in two years. Along with reviewer feedback on the Mild/Moderate program currently in operation, reviewers were helpful in providing advice to the program for them to consider as they prepare a Common Standards document that addresses all the programs offered by the district.

In general, based upon the evidence reviewed over the course of the two days, the program appears to be well managed and no major concerns were discovered. Some areas of potential growth or improvement were discussed by the review team, several of which had been identified by the program personnel in the preparation of its first biennial report.

Feedback was well received by the program personnel. Personnel expressed gratitude at having the opportunity for reviewers to examine their program prior to a formal site visit. They commented that they valued the constructive comments by the reviewers about program operations as it relates to the standards, documentation, and expectations at a formal accreditation site visit.